



Commonwealth of Kentucky Personnel Cabinet

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Diabetes costs moving in the right direction

New figures show state programs working

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 24, 2017) - Costs for diabetic treatment are on the decline, according to a review of 2016 healthcare data provided to the Kentucky Employees' Health Plan (KEHP). New numbers show diabetic members are not only adhering to their medications, the usage of other prescription drugs is down 3.5 percent. Likewise, emergency room visits are down 10.3 percent; doctor's office visits decreased 3.1 percent; and hospital admissions declined 6.5 percent from 2015.

KEHP provides health insurance to more than 260,000 state employees, retirees and others, and spends more than one million dollars in diabetes claims each year. It's one of the most costly medical conditions for the state's largest self-insured health plan.

But KEHP is seeing the tide turn. With the implementation of several innovative programs, members are taking a more proactive role in their diabetic care and, in some cases, are able to actually reduce their costs and improve their health.

One of the newest programs offered by KEHP is the Diabetes Value Benefit (DVB), which allows members with a diabetes diagnosis to receive maintenance prescriptions and supplies, such as diabetic strips, free or at a reduced copay or coinsurance, with no deductible.

Jenny Goins, Commissioner of the Department of Employee Insurance says, "Many times the cost of medical and pharmacy treatment prohibits members from receiving care. The

goal of the DVB is to encourage members to control their diabetes through regular doctor visits and by adhering to their prescribed medication.”

The program is working. While the number of diabetic prescriptions per patient went up 5.4 percent in 2016, the total number of prescriptions went down 3.5 percent. This data indicates that as members managed their diabetes, they were also able to reduce the use of other medications.

More than 23,000 KEHP members have been positively diagnosed with diabetes, down from 25,000 members in 2015. Kentucky as a whole ranks 12th in the nation for diabetes. It's the 7th leading cause of death by disease in the Commonwealth.

Chris Biddle, a KEHP member who's been diagnosed with diabetes, has seen the benefits of KEHP's programs first-hand. "I began utilizing the wellness program, and (through DVB) my medications and testing supplies are now very low or no-cost. My numbers have improved so much that I ceased taking some of my other cardiac medications and my diabetes medications have been cut in half - a big savings out of my pocket! I'm now going to the doctor about half as much as I did before. I found numerous benefits from this program and I urge others who share my condition to take advantage of these offerings."

KEHP also provides coverage for the Diabetes Self-Management Education program and pays 100 percent of the cost of the Diabetes Prevention Program for those with pre-diabetes, both of which have been recognized as innovative programs in the education and treatment of the disease.

“Our goal is to encourage members to become more involved in their health,” Personnel Cabinet Secretary Thomas Stephens said. “Through programs like the Diabetes Value Benefit, Go365, Vitals, LiveHealth Online and others, we are seeing a significant return on investment. But more than that, we’re seeing our members’ health improve overall.”

Additional information for KEHP members can be found at <http://kehpn.ky.gov> or at <https://livingwell.ky.gov>.

Kentuckians who are not covered by the KEHP can get information about diabetes resources, such as the Department for Public Health’s Health Living with Diabetes courses or other diabetes self-management education courses, by visiting the Kentucky Diabetes Resources [Directory](#) . Diabetes self-management courses are available as well as programs for individuals who are at-risk for developing diabetes all around Kentucky.

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